

San Antonio, TX—Today, U.S. Rep. Ciro D. Rodriguez (TX-23), a member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, announced that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will make a one-time payment of \$250 dollars to eligible Veterans and survivors to mitigate the effects of the current economy. The VA estimates \$700 million in payments will be made, with payments beginning in June of 2009. Additionally the VA announced \$4,028,910 million in projects for Fort Bliss and VA facilities.

“One of the several reasons I supported the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act was because I knew some of the funding would go toward making the lives of our veterans, troops and their families better through new construction and facility improvement,” said Rodriguez. In addition to increased care for our veterans, we’re going to save and create millions of American jobs, and give 95% of Americans a tax cut.”

To be eligible for the \$250 payment, VA beneficiaries must have received compensation, pension, dependency and indemnity compensation, or spina bifida benefits at any time between November 2008 and January 2009. Also, beneficiaries must reside within the United States or Puerto Rico, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, or the U.S. Virgin Islands.

No application is necessary. VA will use its existing payment records to determine eligibility to the \$250 payment. Beneficiaries will receive their payments in the same way (either by direct deposit or mail) they receive their monthly VA benefits. VA will inform beneficiaries and the public when releasing the payments. This payment is not countable in determining eligibility for VA pension or Parents’ DIC. The Internal Revenue Service cannot tax this payment.

The law allows only one \$250 payment per individual. VA beneficiaries who also receive benefits from the Social Security Administration or Railroad Retirement Board will be paid through those agencies, and will therefore not receive the payment from VA.

A list of the projects announced for the El Paso area is below:

- \$825,500 to replace domestic heating and water valves in El Paso
- \$280,000 to renovate primary care space for behavioral health
- \$27,250 to repair / replace site lighting and ballasts – FCA corrections

- \$239,000 to repair / replace damaged heating, ventilation and air conditioning ducts
- \$550,000 to convert site to desert xero-scape landscaping
- \$220,000 to renovate patient care areas on 3rd floor, Phase 1
- \$1,142,857 to implement selected conservation methods
- \$744,303 for the National Cemetery Administration's non recurring maintenance projects at Fort Bliss

A list of the projects announced for the San Antonio area is below:

- \$3,525,00 to renovate for a new outpatient clinic in San Antonio
- \$600,000 to renovate an existing operating room
- \$855,400 for the National Cemetery Administration's non recurring maintenance projects at Fort Sam Houston

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